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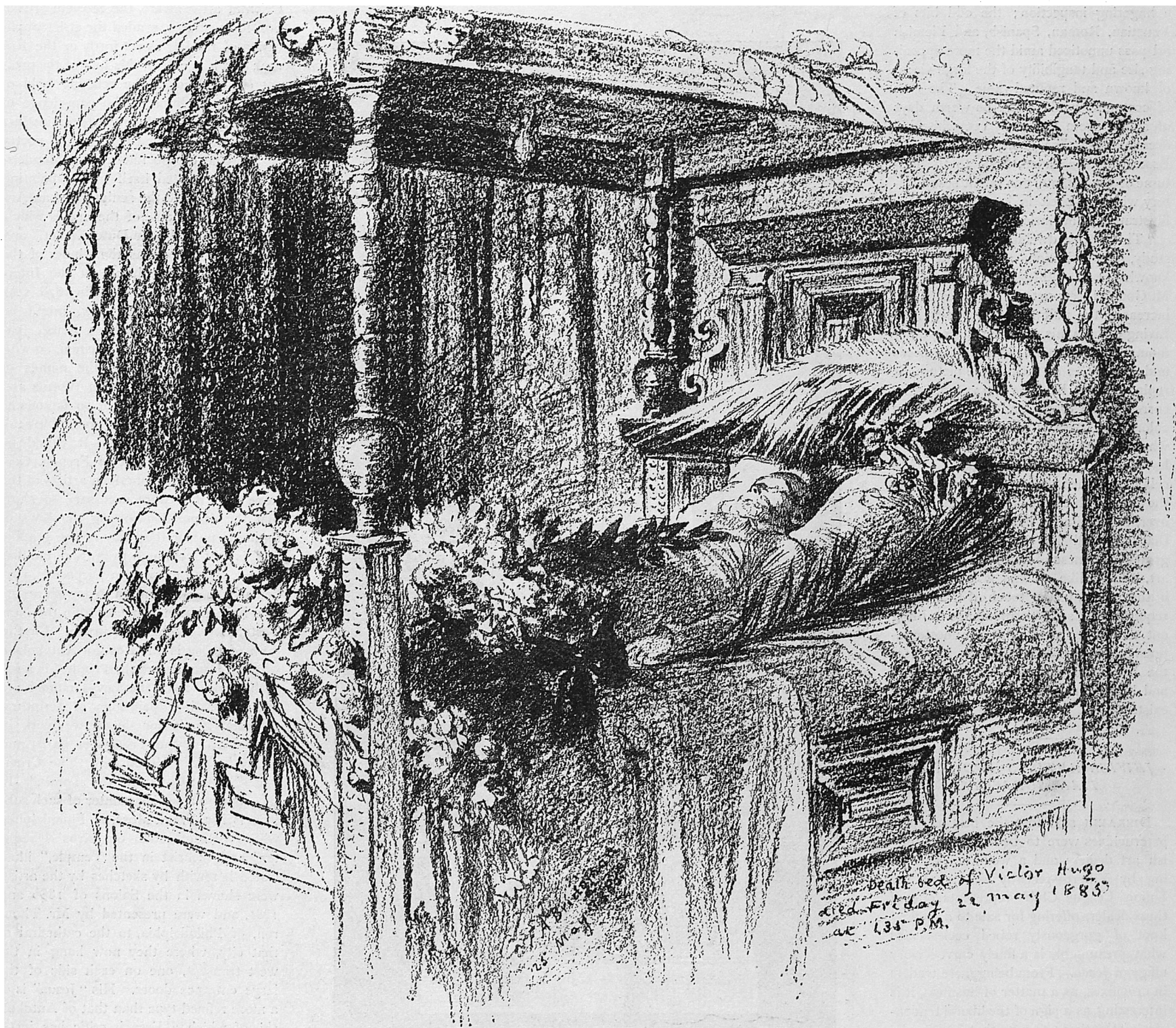
## VICTOR HUGO AS AN ARTIST.

THE death of the greatest of Frenchmen has given renewed interest to every anecdote and detail concerning his glorious life and his many-sided genius. With the poet, the orator, the novelist, the humanitarian, we are not concerned here; but as a draughtsman and water-colorist he well deserves to be spoken of in a journal devoted to the graphic arts.

Victor Hugo had really surprising artistic faculties. In his notice of the Salon of 1859, Charles Baudelaire remarks: "I have not found among the landscape painters the supernatural beauty of the landscapes of Dela-

Victor Hugo never learned to draw except in the very imperfect mechanical way in which we all learn at school. The first line he ever drew from nature was when he was already a man. He was travelling in a diligence in the neighborhood of Melun, and during a change of horses he entered an old church, was struck by the beauty of the apse, and tried to sketch it, using the crown of his hat as a drawing board. "This was the first time," Victor Hugo used to say, "that I understood how useful the copying of nature might be to me in my literary work, and since then I have always loved to note the originalities of local architecture when that architecture is natural, and not touched up by restorers. Climate is written

hand to change to his own taste the scenery of the upper room in "Lucrèce Borgia." Later on we find the manager of the Porte Saint-Martin signing a formal agreement "to follow the indications furnished by M. Victor Hugo for the scenery of the fourth part of 'Marie d'Angleterre' and for all the other details of the mise en scène." In "Le Rhin, Lettres à un ami" (1838) Victor Hugo speaks continually of the drawings which he is making of staircases, spires and street scenes at Heidelberg, and the manuscripts themselves of these letters are covered with drawings and sketches of singular precision, as may be seen from the fac-similes published in "L'Artiste" in 1840 and 1841. Some few years ago Léo-



VICTOR HUGO AFTER DEATH.

SKETCHED IN THE DEATH-CHAMBER BY FREDERICK A. BRIDGMAN, AND COURTEOUSLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE ART AMATEUR.

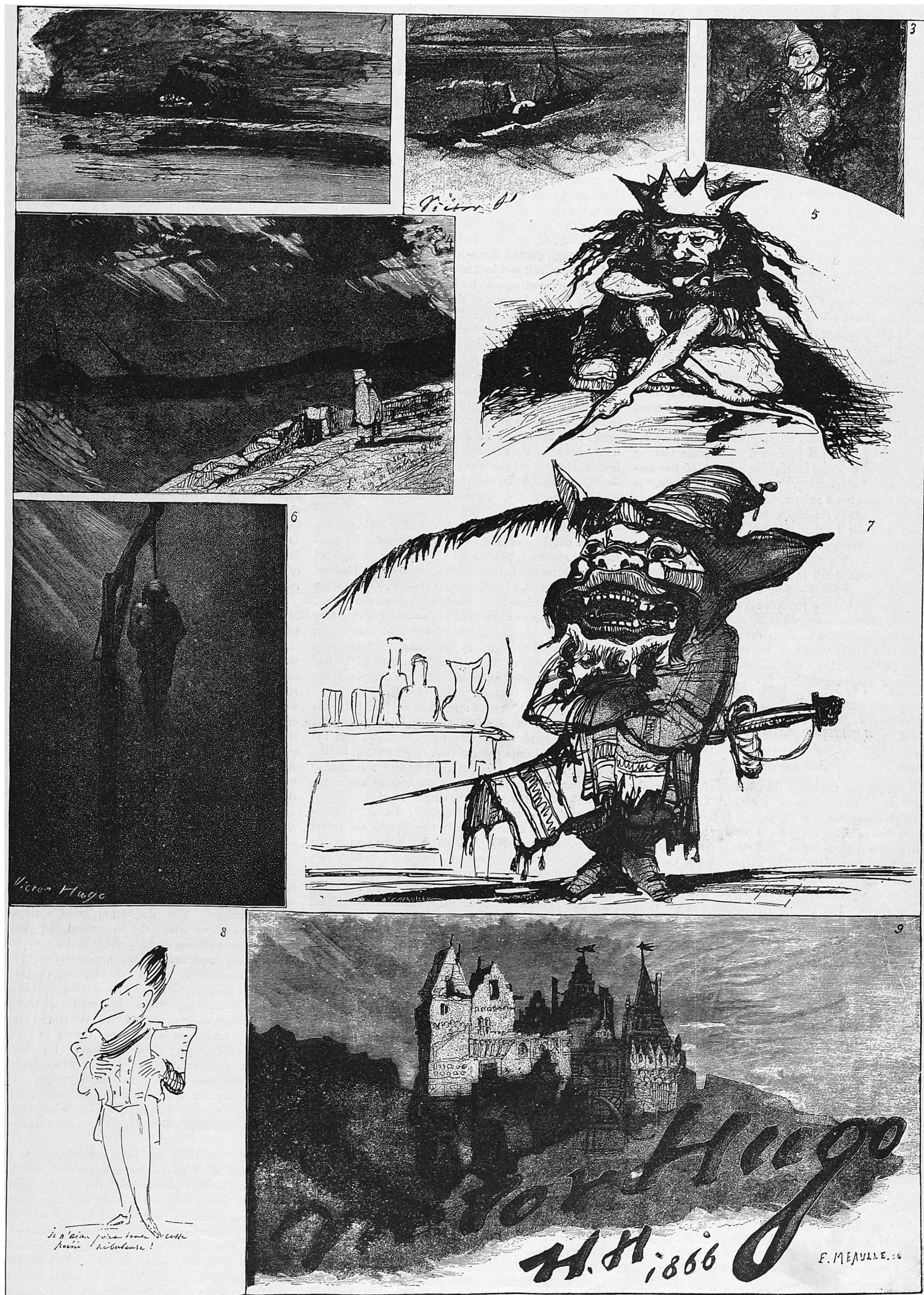
croix, nor the magnificent imagination which flows through the drawings of Victor Hugo. I speak of his drawings in India ink, for it is too evident that in words our poet is the king of landscape painters." During his exile at Guernsey in particular Victor Hugo used to amuse himself by drawing. His instruments were the first that came to hand—a quill pen, a rolled paper, a match, a feather. With these improvised brushes he drew the château of Ruy Gomez, with its crumbling towers, its ruined pinnacles, its sombre and gaping archways, or some mediæval street, with its pointed gables and swinging signs, or else some vast expanse of tumultuous sea on which a ship is tossed and tumbled, "fracta sed invicta," the emblem of the poet's own destiny. The drawing is that of a poet, the whole value being due to the strength of the draughtsman's poetic imagination.

in architecture: a pointed roof means rain; a flat roof sun; a roof laden with stones signifies wind."

Victor Hugo only made use of this faculty of drawing, which he thus discovered, at capricious intervals, and as a distraction rather than as a serious occupation; but one feels, on examining the results which he obtained without having had any training or teaching, that he might have become a master of capital importance. Many of his drawings, which are in the possession of Paul Meurice, of Auguste Vacquerie and other friends, surprise us by the logic and sureness of the method as well as by the grace and force of the conception. The master's first drawings were caricatures. Then he passed on to making sketches for the scenery of his dramas. In the interesting semi-autobiography, "Victor Hugo raconté par un témoin de sa vie," we see him taking the paint pot and brush in

pold Flameng engraved on wood for "L'Année terrible" two melancholy views of the ruins of the village and castle of Falkenstein sketched by Victor Hugo during a visit to Luxembourg. Other drawings of Hugo have been lithographed, engraved or reproduced in facsimile in "Sept Dessins de Gens de Lettres," Paris, 1874; in "Dessins de Victor Hugo avec notice de Th. Gautier," Paris, 1863; and in "Dessins de Victor Hugo pour Les Travailleurs de la Mer, gravés par M. Méaulle," Paris, 1880. Others have been reproduced in "L'Artiste" at various times, others in "L'Art" in 1875, and others in M. Barbou's book, "Victor Hugo et son temps." Auguste Vacquerie possesses a large collection of Victor Hugo's earlier drawings, marines and landscapes of grand style and full of real artistic merit. Some of these drawings were given to him by the master; others were bartered





SOME DRAWINGS BY VICTOR HUGO.

1, 2, 3. SKETCHES. 4. JEANNIE (IN "LÉGENDE DES SIÈCLES"). 5. "LE ROI S'AMUSE." 6. JOHN BROWN, "PRO CHRISTO, SICUT CHRISTUS." 7. GOULATROMBA, "UN HOMME FORT DOUX ET DE VIE ÉLÉGANTE!" 8. "UN CLASSIQUE." 9. MEDIEVAL CHÂTEAU ON THE RHINE.



against mediæval coffers and cupboards, for which Victor Hugo had a great liking; others were won at draughts and backgammon; others were bought at the sale of Hugo's house in the Rue de la Tour d'Auvergne in 1852.

The drawings made by Victor Hugo during his exile are less exclusively picturesque than those above referred to, and more human in sentiment; such is the remarkable picture of John Brown, the first proofs of which, engraved by Paul Chenay with the legend "Pro Christo, sicut Christus," were seized by the imperial police. It was during his residence at Guernsey that Victor Hugo made the wonderfully eloquent illustrations for his "Travailleurs de la Mer." After the war he spent less time in drawing, but what he did produce was richer in color and more complicated in composition than most of his former work. Such are three drawings which have been engraved for the popular edition of "Quatre-Vingt-Treize" and three drawings for the popular edition of "Notre-Dame de Paris."

In the above notes I have indicated briefly to collectors some of the places where they can study Victor Hugo's drawing and painting, but I make no pretence to completeness. Some day or other one of Hugo's admirers will doubtless prepare a catalogue of the master's drawings, and then the public will be astounded to find how much he produced; and if the catalogue is accompanied by fac-similes of his finest compositions the astonishment at his fertility will be combined with admiration of his powerful imagination, his striking effects, and his curious and very personal processes. Théophile Gautier boldly reckoned Hugo among the masters of the Romantic school of painting. "M. Hugo," he wrote, "is not only a poet but a painter, and a painter whom Louis Boulanger, Camille Roqueplan and Paul Huet would not disown as their brother. When he is travelling he sketches everything that strikes him. The contour of a hill, the lace-work outline of the horizon, a strange cloud-form, a curious detail in a door or window, a ruined tower, an antique belfry—these are his notes; then in the evening, at the inn, he retraces his outline with a pen, shades it, colors it, strengthens it, and gives an effect; and so the rough sketch, often drawn on the crown of his hat in a shaky diligence, becomes a drawing very like an etching, and of a capriciousness and savor which surprise artists themselves."

T. C.

#### AMATEUR PHOTOGRAPHY.

##### IV.—LANDSCAPE.

IN the popular mind it is the triumph of photography that it so perfectly reproduces detail. To the professional photographer that photograph is the most praiseworthy that presents the greatest number of objects with sharpness and distinctness. But this is not the way we see with the human eye. The exclamation of Corô, so frequently quoted, "I see nothing, everything is there!" is but an exaggerated expression of the true nature of human vision. The eye, in fact, seizes a single thing. Everything else is merely indicated, and experience supplies the imperfectness of sight.

It is on this side that art lies. Art expresses some salient fact, and other things fall into relations of more or less moment, but all subsidiary. The compromises that photography will make toward this end in the hands of an artist, or any one of artistic feeling, are much greater than was formerly supposed. At the outset one abandons the attitude of the professional photographer. It is not detail we are searching for, but a whole, a single impression. This demands sacrifices, which one must be willing to make. Not everything in a landscape belongs in a picture, but with a little selection, with knowledge of what constitutes a picture, or feeling for picturesqueness without knowledge, and a comprehension of the limitations of the camera, nature can be made to yield abundant material for artistic landscape photography.

The first thing necessary is to select the view. As in a composition, there must be a salient spot on which the eye unconsciously rests, and to which everything leads, through the arrangement of the lines or of the masses of light and shade. Let us take a cottage at the base of a hillside, with a young wood behind it. The slope is treeless, and a path from the house runs up the hill. This is a view that, according to its position, the camera may reproduce in several ways. But the results will not be equally fruitful. The cottage, it is evident, is the main object. It is in the foreground, and its lines must claim attention. We take the camera out and adjust its tripod

so that the lens will be on a level with the eye, to avoid unnecessary stooping. Two things will now be found necessary: First, the ability to judge the effect of an inverted image on the ground glass, and, secondly, the faculty of translating color into black and white. Masses of foliage, for example, of different tints in nature, are liable to come out dead black masses, when a different effect of light might bring out half tones and other pleasing gradations.

To get the real value of our cottage, it must be taken in perspective, otherwise we have flat surfaces and miss the necessary shadows. Although the cottage is the chief object in the view, it would be too obviously intrusive in the centre of the picture. Adjust the camera until it is either in the right or left of the foreground. It is, we will say, to the left. Here it must not be too low. Allow enough ground about it at least for its foundations; otherwise it will lack an air of stability. We have it then in perspective, with its front diagonally disposed from the left-hand corner of the view, the path carrying the line up the hillside toward the right-hand corner and meeting the horizon line, which is one-third from the top. The left-hand upper corner is filled with the wood, which also makes a background for the house in perspective. Here we have an agreeable arrangement of lines. Now we must consider the light and shade, for on such contrasts picturesqueness greatly depends. If the sun is facing us clearly we get no shadows at all. If the light comes from the right hand it is equally clear that we get no shadows, for the hill slope is bare. If the light comes from the left we get shadows from the wood and from the house. If the light comes from the left, and a little behind the camera, the shadows are more vivid and more picturesque.

It appears, therefore, that after having selected the view we should wait until the proper time of day for making the exposure. This we do. On looking through the camera we see we have a picture, so to speak, bisected diagonally. One half has objects in shadow. On the other half lie the shadows. If the hillside seems too barren, and some sheep or a group of cows wander there, they should be welcomed graciously; otherwise some object may be secured to break up the space. A friend or a wayfaring man can throw himself on the turf. A hay rake, or other garden implements, can be placed on the proper spot.

The composition is now arranged, and the hour has arrived. We make these early trials with the open lens. The foreground is the object of our attention, and the cottage the objective point of that. In focusing, let the eye hold the cottage. Adjust the lens with reference to that alone. When the aspect of the cottage meets approval, let everything else take care of itself.

In making the exposure, give plenty of time. The amateur in his first efforts is likely to under-expose rather than over-expose. But it is much easier to correct an over-exposed plate than one under-exposed, so let the error be on the right side. A rule often urged in landscape photography is, "Expose for the shadows, let the lights take care of themselves." Detail in shadow is one of the charms of a picture, so let the shadows have sufficient time to gather up their detail.

Those elements of the picture which the exposure has not secured may be often supplied by judicious development. If the picture is too light, if the shadows want strength, use a strong developer, that is to say, add pyro, which we have seen is the element that gives density. If, on the contrary, the picture is largely in shadow, or the shadows are very strong, dilute the normal developer with water, and allow plenty of time to the development, and the detail of the shadows will come out to your satisfaction without the high lights losing in quality.

We have taken an example in which the conspicuous feature is in the foreground. It is now, we will say, in the middle distance. Let us conceive of a glimpse through a wood. Trees, in comparative shadow in the foreground, part and disclose a bit of sunlit landscape in the middle distance, the wood closing again only to allow glimpses of landscape and sky behind. The trees and shadows in the foreground here form, as it were, a frame to the picture beyond. Place the camera so that this opening shall take a slightly diagonal line; also watch the intervening tree boughs to see that they do not cut the picture disagreeably. Focus for the lighted spot in the middle distance, which must have its base below the centre of the plate. Although the object of the picture lies in this lighted space, in exposing remember the shadowed foreground, and consider the network of interlacing boughs, which are to do so much not only in

affording forms against the light farther on, but by giving many gradations of tones to the picture (and consequently color), which the development must be regulated to bring out.

Suppose we have, for a third trial, a view in which the remote distance is the leading feature. It is, perhaps, a winding stream that we see far away, shining in broad sunlight. Above it is the sky filled with summer clouds. While these catch the eye, neither mid distance nor remote distance will be sufficient for the picture. Still take thought of the foreground. Let it have plenty of detail, judiciously arranged with a view to picturesque effect. In such a view as we are considering, the conspicuous lighting is in the distance. In this case let the horizon line be low, a little below the middle of the plate. (Never let it cut the picture in halves.) Be careful of the foreground. Do not let a light object stand conspicuously against a dark one. This is bad at any time, but here any bright spot would take the eye away from the light in the distance, which is broad and diffused.

In marines the lighting, instead of coming from the right or left lower corner of the picture, is even better if it comes from the opposite direction. This is especially true when boats are to be photographed. In that case we have the value of the reflections and the boats as illuminated objects showing us their shadows.

Coast scenes are almost always full of interest, and are easily managed. An old boat appeals to every one's sense of the picturesque. If it is the conspicuous object, place the camera so as to get not only its perspective, but its shadows. Consider it with reference to other lines. The rules for composition which guide the artist are equally appropriate here. Rules in art are but sorry dependencies; but if a picture seems wanting, they serve to account for the lack. Thus, horizontal lines must be avoided. Lines in one direction must be balanced by opposing lines. If the general lines of the picture form a wedge or a pyramid they will present an agreeable artistic arrangement.

Avoid the phenomenal in landscape as in art. A rustic bridge, an old mill, a few sheep nibbling, are better material for artistic landscape than the buttes of Idaho or the strange formations of Colorado. The value of reflections has been intimated, but the abuse of reflections almost every one will remember in Yosemite views, current some years ago, in which the steep wall of a cañon was reflected in the river beneath. The line of the base of the rock and the river bisected the photograph, and one was quite apt in consequence to set the picture upside down. This is curious, but it is not art. In some Albertypes taken for the national government of a lake in the Yellowstone country, the landscape and its reflections in the lake meet in the centre of the picture, making the lines of an hour-glass, and result in a disagreeable view of what might otherwise have been a charming scene.

Thus far we have spoken of landscape seen through an open lens. It will have been observed that with the camera comes a thin flat piece of brass, with apertures, which may be slipped in front of the lens, and is called the diaphragm. The diaphragm gives a narrower angle of view, and brings the foreground and distance into greater harmony than is possible by the wide angle, which gives importance to the foreground at the expense of the distance. In using the diaphragm begin with the largest aperture, for now we are treading on the heels of more delicate experiments in artistic photography. This harmony, or what we may call the single impression of the landscape, is still more closely attained by what is called stopping down the camera. For this purpose there come small pieces of brass, which can be inserted in the same manner as the diaphragm. These cut off the corners, as it were, and in the image the detail at the edges loses its sharpness of focus, which brings it into better relations with the more prominent features of the view.

Thus far everything has been subordinated to some salient point at which the camera is directed, and that is always focused into prominence. But the photograph is capable of giving also that mystery and suggestiveness which is so fascinating in modern landscape art. This is done by making the exposure with the camera a little out of focus. The lines are not sharp, but appear softened as if bathed in the atmosphere, an effect which the painter strives eagerly to secure. This is the way in which most artists interested in photography make the camera serve their purposes. To secure the proper result, patient experiment is necessary, but no amount of labor and effort in this direction will be wasted.

M. G. H.